

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A low-molecular (meth)acrylic acid (salt)-based polymer having a good color tone is obtained by polymerizing an aqueous solution of at least one monomer component of a high concentration in the presence of an alkaline substance, wherein: 100 to 95 mol % of the at least one monomer component is a monoethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acid (salt) monomer (a) having 3 to 6 carbon atoms; and 0 to 5 mol % of the at least one monomer component is a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer (b) copolymerizable with the monomer (a) (wherein the total of (a) and (b) is 100 mol %); and wherein: a persulfate salt and hydrogen peroxide are used together as polymerization catalysts; and the entirety of the alkaline substance as used is set not to be more than 99 mol % of the amount which is necessary for neutralizing all acid groups of the at least one monomer component; and wherein: the dropwise addition of the hydrogen peroxide is completed at the latest 10 minutes earlier than the completion time of the dropwise addition of the at least one monomer component; and/or the amount of the hydrogen peroxide as added till the initiation of the dropwise addition of the at least one monomer component is kept from exceeding 10 % of the entirety of the hydrogen peroxide as added. The resultant polymer is useful for such as detergent compositions and water-treating agents.